

THE COMMINATION

Prescribed in the LITURGY

OF THE

Church of England,

VINDICATED;

AND

Recommended to the Consideration of
all Pious Christians.

IN A

SERMON,

Preached to a Countrey Audience on the First
Sunday in Lent, 16⁷⁹/₈₀.

By Benjamin Camfeild, *Rector of Aylston near Leicester.*

*Cursed is he that maketh the Blind to wander out of the way: And all
the people shall say Amen. Deut. 27. 18.*

L O N D O N,

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TO THE
COURTEOUS READER,

 *OW this honest Discourse may
relish with thee, I know
not: Yet if it prove Medici-
nal, the season I am sure, is
good and proper enough for it, and, it
matters not much, though it should be
less palatable. Two desperately-malig-
nant humors it hath to encounter and work
upon, Faction and Profaneness, both of
them now almost grown Epidemical. God
Almighty send it a Success answerable to
the sincere intentions of him that tenders
it. But, if thou art Friend to an Order-
ly Piety and Christian Life, He may
promise himself, moreover, thy accep-
tance and Prayers: And that is all,*

The Epistle to the Reader.

which I have to desire of Thee on his behalf: Unless it be this point of common Justice, that thou Read it over without prejudice, and consider of it, before thou pass censure: But This too I should rather commend unto thee for thy own Benefit, because Spiritual Physick Operates not like to Bodily, whether we think on it, or no.

Farewell.

A Lent Sermon.

Deuteron. XXVII. XV.

— *And all the people shall answer, and say Amen.*

IT is a most excellent Devotional Service, which our Church hath charitably provided for the *Beginning of Lent* in the *Communion* prescribed to be used on *Ashwedensday* (and at other times* of Solemn Humiliation, when the *Ordinary* shall appoint) as one of the most proper Helps and Expedients she could furnish Penitents with, in that loose and degenerate Age, wherein our Lot is fallen, which is impatient of a severer Discipline; namely, *That, according to the Pattern set us, in this Chapter principally, the General Sentences of Gods Curses against impenitent sinners be distinctly pronounced in the presence of all the People, and that every one that hears them should answer as distinctly unto each Sentence, Amen.*

But such is the Licentiousness and Profaneness of our Generation, that, instead of desiring and promoting the Restoration of *Primitive Discipline*, we will not vouchsafe to come up so much as *Thus far*. We make light

Cum primis salutariis est ceremonia: sed non video cur debeat exhiberi solum uno die, & non sapienter. Bucer. for so in the Liturgie of Edward 6. it was determined to Ashwedensday, but after enlarged to divers times of the year, with an especialty only to the First day of Lent. See Mr. Ham. L'Estrange's Alliance of Divine Offices. ch. 11. p. 318.

of sin, and slight the Calls of God and his Church unto Repentance; and live, as if we thought that the happiness and Salvation of the World to come, were worthy but of very little Care and Labour and Pains in our striving to secure it here. We have found out new and easie wayes and methods to Heaven, which the Primitive Christians, the Church of Christ from the Beginning were never acquainted with; wayes to Heaven without Repentance, without confessing and forsaking our sins, and bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance. We are not for going so far about, but a nearer Cut, a directer Passage of our own devising, a Leap as it were *from Hell to Heaven*, or hugging our sins all the dayes of our Life, at Death and the Grave to part and shake hands with them. We have time enough to spare for Worldly pleasures and divertisements; but when Religion challengeth our attendance, we have no leisure at all for it. We can spend hours and days freely enough in Visits, in Sports, in Drinking, and 'tis well sometimes if not in worse imployments: But, Oh! how *Scrupulous* do we seem in Conscience of taking any part from our six working dayes and Devoting it unto God!

Pardon me, Beloved, if upon this occasion, I speak somewhat plainly and freely to you. A Pan-Cake Bell, as we call it, upon *Shrove-Tuesday*, though no Authority injoyn it, will easily draw men from the works of their Callings, and every one is free and forward enough in hearkning to the Summons of it. What a General Rendevouz and Croud of People is there every where usually upon it! But the Bells may Call loud enough and Chime long enough upon the *Ash-Wednesday* after it (and that by Authority too both of Church and State) yet few or none will take the warning given them, to lay aside their Worldly business for a while,

to

to resort to the Congregation, there to Confess their Sins, and give proof of their Repentance, and Humble themselves together before Almighty God, in order to the procuring of his Forgiveness and Blessing.

Nor is this all. I would it were. Too many there are, that are gone a degree farther in their Impiety. They content not themselves with *abstaining* from the Churches Service, but they sit down also in the *Chair of the Scorners*. They Scoff at, and Deride, Revile, and Blaspheme that most excellent Service which we then perform, as a *Superstitious, Foolish or Wicked* thing, an *uncharitable Cursing of our selves and others*, &c. Of whom I must say, as St. Jude in another Case, "These speak evil of those things, which they know not, *Psal. 10.* "but what they know Naturally, as Brute Beasts, in "those things they corrupt themselves.

Alas! None of those Persons consider, what a provocation it is unto God Almighty, *in the dayes and seasons of his Grace to harden their Hearts against him*: How dear it cost his *People of old* in the Wilderness, unto whom therefore "he sware in his wrath, that they *Psal. 95.* "should not enter into his Rest: How dismal a Requital he hath threatned unto such, *Prov. 1. ch.* "Because "I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my "hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought "all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof; "I also will Laugh at your Calamity, and Mock when "your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as Desolation, and your destruction cometh as a Whirlwind, "when distress and anguish cometh upon you: Then "shall they call upon me, saith He, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find "me; for that they hated Knowledge, and did not "chuse the fear of the Lord; they would none of my "Counsel, they despised all my reproof: Therefore shall they

A Lent Sermon.

"they eat of the Fruit of their own way, and be filled
 "with their own devices. — These Persons think not,
 how implacable God hath declared himself upon *such a
 like miscarriage*, as this of theirs is. You have a full and
 lively Picture of it drawn for your view, *Iſa. 22. 12. &c.*
 "In that day did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping
 "and mourning, and to baldness and to girding with
 "Sack-cloath; and behold joy and gladness, slaying Ox-
 "en and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine,
 (saying with the Epicurean Drolls of all Ages) "Let
 "us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. And it was
 "revealed in my ears by the Lord of Hosts, (saith the
 "Prophet) surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from
 "you till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts. — Nor
 do I aggravate the matter here by this Comparison be-
 yond what is Just and Right: For *whenever our Go-
 vernors, both in Church and State, do by their Laws and
 Orders call us to Mourning and Fasting and Humiliation,*
we are to look upon it and interpret it, as if God himself
call'd us by them thereunto; and he expects we should
 take the warning, which they as *his Deputies*, give us,
 and construes *our despising of them, as a contempt to*
himself, by whose Authority they Act; And so also of old
 he gave the warning to his People, according to that of
 the Prophet *Joel, ch. 2.* "Blow the Trumpet, Sanctifie
 "a Fast, Call a Solemn Assembly; Gather the People;
 "Sanctifie the Congregation; Assemble the Elders; ga-
 "ther the Children and those that suck the Breasts;
 "Let the Bride-groom go forth of his Chamber, and
 "the Bride out of her Closet; Let the Priests, the Mi-
 "nisters of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the
 "Altar, and let them say, spare thy People, O Lord!
 — This you see, is the *Truth of the Case*, we are all
 herein Transgressors; though it may be aggravated in
 some by their *Contumacy*, and mitigated in others by their
Seduction and *Inadvertency*. Be-

See 2 cor. 5.
 20.
 1 Theſ. 4. 8.
 &c.

Beseech we God of his infinite mercy therefore, that he lay not *this great Iniquity* to the Charge of this sinful Kingdom ! Pray we, as *Moses* did for the *Israelites*, Deut. 9. 27.
 "Look not O Lord, unto the stubbornness of this People, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin ! Or, as we have it our *Letany*. — "From hardness of heart
 "and contempt of thy Word and Commandment, Good
 "Lord deliver us !

However, upon all these Considerations laid together, I have purposely diverted unto *the Text even now Read* ; that I might meet with those who will not so much as afford their presence at such a Solemnity, and give them that account of *this part of our Service*, which may, by Gods Grace, engage them hereafter to a conscientious frequenting of it.

And, that I may do this with the better success, I will *First* set before you *the Law and Practise*, as it stood among the *Israelites* ; what was the Divine institution and Ordinance among them in this matter ; and then *Secondly*, shew you, *how far we are still concerned in it*, or what this observance among them suggests to invite and justify or vindicate our imitation.

First, *It is good to consider the Order, which the Lord kept with his People in times past*, as the *Nonconformists* T. 6. L. 1.
p. 196.
 themselves have sometimes worded it upon other Occasions.

The First provision about this we Read of *Deuter.*
 II. 26. &c. — "Behold, saith *Moses*, I set before you Augmentatio
Boni ; Diminutio
Boni Aben-
Erya.
 "this day a Blessing and a Curse (that is, Good and
 Evil, Happyness and Misery) "A Blessing, if ye obey
 "the Commandment of the Lord your God, which I
 "Command you this day, and a Curse if ye will not
 "obey. — And it shall come to pass, saith he, when the
 "Lord thy God hath brought thee into the Land, whither thou goest to Possess it, that thou shalt put the
 B Blessing

*Ainsworth in
Loc.*

*Dandum cura-
bis, operâ scil.
Levitarum.
Vatablus.*

Dent. 33. 10.

Vatablus.

"Blessing upon Mount *Gerizim*, and the Curse upon
"Mount *Ebel*; Are they not on the other side *Jordan*,
&c? — Thou shalt put, or give, the Blessing Upon, or
Towards, Mount *Gerizim* (for so the *Hebrew* Preposi-
tion *Gnal* sometimes signifies) that is, *cause it to be pro-
nounced there*; and so the Curse in like manner Upon,
or Towards, Mount *Ebel*. Thou shalt see or take care
that the Blessing and Curse be given forth by the *Priests*,
the *Levites*, towards these Mountains respectively; by
the *Levites*, I say, whose Office it was to "teach *Jacob*
"Gods Judgments, and *Israel* his Law; by whom God
had before ordered the Solemn Blessing, *ch. 10.* and the
Curses too, as afterwards we find it.

But of this same matter he speaks more particu-
larly and distinctly in *This 27th Chapter. Psal. 12. &c.*
"These shall stand on Mount *Gerizim*, to bless the Peo-
"ple, when ye are come over *Jordan*, *Simeon*, and *Le-
"vi*, and *Judah*, and *Issachar*, and *Joseph*, (under which,
Ephraim and *Manasseh*) and *Benjamin*. These shall
stand on Mount *Gerizim* to Bless the People, *ad au-
diendam benedictionem*, to hear the Blessing pronounced
on the People for Obedience. "And these shall stand
"upon Mount *Ebel* to Curse, *Reuben*, *Gad*, and *Asher*,
"and *Zebulun*, *Dan* and *Naphtali*. These on Mount
Ebel to Curse, or *for the Cursing*, that is, in like man-
ner, *to hear the Curse denounced for Disobedience*. For
the People were not on either Mountain to pronounce
the Blessing or the Curse, but to hear and witness unto
both proclaimed by the Levites, as it follows. — "And
"the *Levites* shall speak and say unto all the men of *Israel*
"with a loud voice, Cursed be (or, is) the man that
"maketh any Graven, or Molten Image, an abomina-
"tion to the Lord, the work of the hands of the Crafts-
"man, and putteth it in a secret place : And all the
"People shall answer, and say, *Amen*. Cursed is he
that

“that setteth light by his Father or his Mother; And
 “all the People shall say *Amen*. — &c. in *Twelve parti-*
culars, in the end of *each* of which it is prescribed still
 in words at length, “And all the People shall say
 “*Amen*. *Munster is mis-*
staken, who
reckon'd but
11.

And as this Office was *twice prescribed by Moses in*
the name of God unto them, as we have seen, so after-
 wards we find it put *in practice under Joshua*, when he
 had Conducted them over *Jordan* to this place. *Josh.*
8. 33. &c. “And all *Israel* and their Elders, and Officers,
 “and their Judges stood on this side the Ark, and on
 “that side, before the Priests, the Levites, which bare
 “the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, as well the
 “stranger (that is, the Proselite) as he that was born
 “among them. Half of them over against Mount *Geri-*
zim, and half of them over against Mount *Ebel*; as
 “*Moses* the Servant of the Lord had Commanded before,
 “that they should Bless the People of *Israel*. And af-
 “terwards he Read all the words of the Law, the Bles-
 “sings and Cursings, according to all that is written in
 “the Book of the Law; there was not a word of all
 “that *Moses* Commanded, which *Joshua* read not before
 “all the Congregation of *Israel* with the Women and
 “the little ones and the Strangers, that were Converfant
 “among them.

An august and full assembly, we see, here, of the
Rulers and all the People, Women and Children too, and
Strangers (who had embraced their Religion) not except-
ed. — And when *Joshua* is said to have read *all the Bles-*
sings and Cursings according to all that was written in
 the Law, and as *Moses* had Commanded, we must un-
 derstand that he issued out his *Warrant*, gave forth his
Edict to the Priests the Levites herein to do their proper
Office, and what they did *at his Command* is ascribed to
 him, as if he had done it. — And so again, though

there be no particular mention here of the Acclamations of all the People *answering and saying Amen*, yet there can be no question at all, but that *so we are to conceive of it*, because All is said to be done by him according to all that was written by Moses in the Book of the Law about it, where he had his Pattern as well as Commission given him, and in which it was *so often repeated*, "*All the People shall say Amen*."

*Vide Matium
in Josh. 8.
Non procul à
Sicimis. Antiq.
L. 4. C. ult.*

Concerning the place where these two Mountains stood, some difference there is among Cosmographers, which I shall not trouble you with. *Josephus* describes them near to *Sichem*, and that is the most common Opinion, it being reported by Travellers into those parts, that near the Gate of that City was *Jacobs Fountain*, and somewhat above that, *a Mount arising with two Tops*, as it were, *one against the other*, which the Inhabitants thereabouts take for *Gerizim and Ebel*, the one upon the *Right hand*, the other on the *Left*, supposing the Face turned to the East or Sun-rising; Mount *Gerizim* Southward, which was accounted *Dextrum mundi latus* the Right side of the World, and Mount *Ebel* Northward, which hath been ever look'd upon as *Male-omnata plaga*, an ill-bodeing Coast.

Now in the Valley, between these two Mountains, as the story tells us, was placed the *Holy Ark*, and next to that the *Priests the Levites* which bore it, and all *Israel*, Officers and People, in their several Tribes, on *this side* and on *that*, *Half of them over against Mount Gerizim*, and *Half of them over against Mount Ebel*. That is, as we are told more particularly, Towards Mount *Gerizim* were the *six heads of the Free Tribes*, with their respective Tribes, *Simeon and Levi*, and *Judah and Issachar* and *Joseph and Benjamin*, all Children of the Free-Women, *Rachel and Lea*. And "*Blessedness*", the *Apostle* tells us, belongs to the Children of the

*Liberarum filij
ex justis Ma-
tribus fami-
liās.*

"the Free-Woman. Gal. 4. 22. 31. — Upon this Mount, afterwards the *Samaritans* are said to have Built their Temple, taking occasion, it seems, from what was now done there for a Superstitious conceit of the place it self, calling themselves, *Those that belong to the Blessed Mount.* — And then for Mount Ebel there were *six others*, the Sons of the Bond-Women, Four of them Born of the two hand-maids, viz. *Gad and Asher*, the Sons of *Zilpah*, *Lea's hand-maid*, *Dan and Naphtali* of *Bilhab*, *Rachel's hand-maid*. But then, to make up the number even with those on the other side, two are added, that were Born indeed of the Free, *Reuben*, the Eldest by *Leah*, but one that had forfeited his dignity by defiling his Fathers-Bed; and *Zebulun* the last of the Sons by *Leah* also, and so the least in Dignity. Thus the People are divided into two equal Choires, as it were, the one on the Right-hand, and the other on the Left, with all their Faces towards the Ark; the Blessings to be pronounced by the Levites, towards those on Mount Gerizim, and the Curses towards those on Mount Ebel, over against them, not unfitly declaring (as one of the Rabbi's observes) *Quantum esset inter benedictionem maledictionemque dissidium*; how great a Distance there is between Obedience and Disobedience, the Blessing and the Curse. A vast Gulf, as it were, between them, like to that we read of in the Gospel, between *Abrahams Bosome* and the place of Torment. They move towards two opposite points, and are not possibly to be reconciled so as to meet together in one.

Well, the Congregation thus set, we are to suppose that some one or more of the Levites did lift up his voice like a Trumpet, and, as God Almighty's Herald propound the Articles of his Law and Covenant, turning first to the Right, that is, towards Mount Gerizim, to utter the Benedictions and Blessings. — But, what these

*Ainsworth in
Deuterom.*

Servarum filij.

*Ora omnium
obversa ad Ar-
cam. Matius ut
supra.*

*Tanquam feci-
alis: Matius
ibid.*

Ainsworth
in Loc.

Masius in Loc.

P. Fagius in
Deuter.

these Blessings were, *Moses* doth not specify; and this silence of his in the Case is look'd upon by some, as *instructive about a Mystery* (in like manner as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* interprets his silence concerning the Genealogie of *Melchisedec*) leading the Sagacious Reader to look for them by *another, which is Christ*, by whom cometh Grace and Truth, and whom God hath sent to Bless us. — But, waving this conjecture though these Blessings are not specified, *it is not to be question'd, but they were rehearsed to the People as well as the Curses*; nay, it is observable, where we have the History of the practise, in the time of *Joshua*, that the chief, *if not only, mention is made of Benediction*, “as *Moses* the Servant of the Lord had Commanded before, that they should Bless the People of *Israel*. *Sola Benedictio agebatur*: It was their Blessing all along that was design'd and aimed at; the other was but *accessory*, a thing as it were, by the by, *Subservient and in order to this Benediction*, as a likely means to remove the impediments and hindrances of it. Those therefore that are versed in the Jewish Antiquities, tell us, that the Blessings are particularly to be Collected out of the Curses here mentioned, answering to each of them. A pause being made by the Levite at the end of every Sentence or Period, both of Blessing and Curse, that the People, on both sides, might attest their approbation *distinctly to every Article*, as he went along, by their *joynt Acclamations of Amen*; only with this difference, Those on Mount *Gerizim* beginning the Amen to the Blessings, and their Brethren on the other side against them on Mount *Ebel* resounding or echoing the like after them; Those on Mount *Ebel* again beginning the Amen to the Curses, and their Brethren on *Gerizim* repeating the same after them. — And it is not improbable but that the twelve *Benedictions*, on the one side, and the twelve *Maledictions*, on the other were
pro-

pronounced *alternatim*, by turn, or *Exchange*, in the way of *Antiphone* or *Responsal*, *succinentes sibi invicem*, as *Josephus* hath it. The Levites suppose, first beginning towards the Right with the Blessings thus, "Blessed is he that worshippeth the true *Jehova* only, and no other Gods besides or with him, whereunto *All the People answer and say Amen*, Those on Mount *Gerizim* beginning the shout, and those on Mount *Ebel* following them therein. And then, turning to the Left, (or another Levite it may be appointed for the Left) "Curfed is the man that maketh any Graven or Molten Image, &c. whereto *All the People again answer and say Amen*, Those on Mount *Ebel* beginning the shout, and those on Mount *Gerizim* following them in the same. And then proceeding to the Second, "Blessed is he that honoureth his Father and Mother; whereunto *all the People in like manner answer and say Amen*. And on the other side, "Curfed is he that setteth light by his Father, or Mother: And *all the People say Amen*. — And so in Order throughout all the rest. The First plainly relates to the leading Duty of man to God, which begins the First Table of the Law. The Second to that of Children to their Parents, which is also the First of the second Table. And then we may observe that the Last is general and comprehensive of all together. On the one side, suppose, "Blessed is he that confirmeth all the words of this Law to do them. — and on the other, — Curfed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them. "And *all the People say Amen*.

Which interlocutory service finished between Priest and People, the Minister, as 'tis probable, proceeded to repeat all that follows in the 28th Chapter as an agreeable Comment or Illustration upon this Blessing and this Curse, which God had caused to be pronounced among them, and they by their *Amen* had consented to the truth and

Antiq. L. 4.
C. ult.

1. Inter Deum
& hominem.
2. inter filium
& patrem.
Munster in Loc.

Deuter. 27. 8.

and equity of; that they might the better understand and consider, *how much was Comprized under either of them*, what good things under the Blessing, and what evil things under the Curse. And it is not unlikely, but these Blessings and Curses, so distinctly proclaimed by Gods Messenger, and attested to by the People, were the *Summary, Epitome, or Abstract of that Law which was at this time also engraven upon 12 great Stones very plainly, [in perpetuam rei memoriam]* for a perpetual Remembrance to them all; The *chief* of those *Commands*, which they were obliged unto, *thus recommended* to their careful observance, both by the hope of Reward, and the fear of punishment.

But, passing by all other observations, we have here, you see, a *Form of worship* prescribed by Moses to all the People, a Form of worship, *whercin both Priest and People were interchangeably to bear a part*, and a Form of worship to be observed *orderly and uniformly among them*. *And all the People shall answer and say Amen.*

It is well, that there was none of the Spirit, or Leaven, of the *Dissentors of our time* then among them. For they would have said, *To what purpose is all this Doe about external and bodily worship? about the uttering of an Amen? about the observing of such Order and Ceremony in it?* Nay, they would have gainsaid and quarrell'd at it, if upon no other ground, yet *meerly because commanded, as an intolerable imposition upon their liberty and freedom, a yoke of bondage*. Alas! It is no engaging now, as it was then, it seems, for all the People, that they shall observe any thing prescribed them about the service of God; so morose and untractable they are. Set them to the *Right hand*, they will take the *Left*: Bid them *Kneel*, or *Stand up*, they will *Sit and Loll*: Bid them *Answer* to any thing, They will be *Mutes*. Bid them *say Amen*; they will rather declare, by some or other

their sign or gesture, a dislike of the disaffection to the worship they are present at. They are not at all for being bound up to any thing, for obliging themselves, or paying their homage and devotion to God [*concepta verborum formula*] in any premeditated Form of words drawn up to their hands. — But that by the way.

All I will now further enquire into about the Text shall be concerning the importance and meaning of this word, Amen, which the People, we may presume, here uttered with a great deal of Solemnity and reverence as well as understanding and affection. As we Read at another time, "when Ezra Blessed the Lord, the Great God; All the People answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands and bowing their heads, and worshipping the Lord with their Faces to the Ground. And there was a command for that Amen too, as well as for this, the Amen at the end of their Doxologies, and praises and prayers, which therefore hath been transcribed into the Churches practise ever since.

Ezra 8. 6.

Well, but what is the proper meaning and interpretation of Amen? That is, the most needful enquiry for our information.

See 1 Chron.
16. 34. &c.
Psal. 89. ult.
106. 48. &c.
1 Cor. 14. 16.
Revel. 7. 12.

In answer to this therefore you must know, that it is Originally an Hebrew word, though since admitted by use and custom into all Languages, made a free denization as it were in all Countries, retain'd in all Tongues and among all People. Now in the Hebrew it hath relation unto Truth, and so it is used sometimes as a Noun, for Truth it self, but more usually as an Adverb, for Truly, in confirmation of Truth.

(1.) It is used as a Noun, for Truth, Verity, Faithfulness; So God himself is call'd The Amen, we English it the "God of Truth. Isa. 65. 16. That he who Blesseth himself in the Earth, shall Bless himself in the God of Truth; and he, that Swareth in the Earth, shall Swear

In Deo Amen,
i. e. in Deo
vero.
Grot. in Loc.

"by the God of Truth. It is in the *Hebrew, in and by God the Amen*. He alone is Truth, the Very and True God, in whose Name we are to Bless, and by whose Name we are to Swear. And thus, in the *New Testament, Christ*, being also the *True God*, is in like manner call'd *The Amen*. Rev. 3. 14. "These things saith the *Amen*, the Faithful and True witness; where the *Later* words explain the *Former*, the Greek pertinently glossing upon the *Hebrew* (as chap. 1. 8. "I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the Ending) *The Amen*, that is, "The Faithful and True witness, or as he elsewhere styles himself "The Truth. St. John 14. 6. And so the word is used too by St. Paul, apply'd to the *Promises of God through him*. 2 Cor. 1. 20. "All the promises of God are in him, yea and in him *Amen*. i. e. *Truth and Truth*; most certain, perfect and infallible Truth.

But then (2ly.) it is most frequently used *Adverbially*, and then, as I said, the importance of it is *Truly* or *Verily*, as we often render it. And this is the *primary signification and use of it*, as a word of *Vehement asseveration or earnest affirming*. Thus in St. Matthew ch. 24, 47. "Amen I say unto you. So it is in the *Original*. We English it "Verily. But then in St. Luke ch. 12. 44. where the same thing is repeated, the Greek *Varies*, ἀληθῶς; that is, *Truly, in Truth*, or, as we there English it, "Of "a Truth I say unto you. — In another place we find it rendred by *vai*, which is, in Greek, the *Adverb of Affirming*, answerable to the *Latines, Etiam, and our Yea*, (as where Christ injoyns, let your Communication be *yea yea*, &c, St. Matth. 5) Thus in St. Matthew ch. 23, 36. "Amen I say unto you, we read it, "Verily. But it is in St. Luke ch. 11. 51. *vai*, "Yea I say unto you, though in our Translation we have no notice of it. — Sometimes we find both the Greek and Hebrew put together. So in the place before quoted, "All the promises

vai, vai, v, v

"Yes in him *yea*, and in him *Amen*. τὸ ναὶ, καὶ τὸ ἀμήν; for the *Noun*: and so for the *Adverb* too. *Revel. 1. 7.* Behold, he cometh with Clouds, and every eye shall see him, &c. ναὶ, ἀμήν, "Yea, Amen. We read it, *Even so Amen*. And this was usually *ingeminated* by our *Blessed Saviour*, when he was most earnest in his asseverations. *Amen, Amen*: or *Verily, Verily I say unto you*. *St. John 3. 3. and 5. 14. 12. 16. 23, &c.*

From all this now we gather, that *Amen* is most properly a note of *Affirmation*. And, when it comes at the end of a *Sentence*, we are to construe it according to the matter going before it. If it be any thing positively declared from God; then *Amen*, is the *Subscription* or *Seal* as it were of our *Faith* added to it. Thus we have it at the end of our *Creed*, *Amen*, that is our *Creed* over again in one word. "So I believe, *πιστεύω*, as *Aquila* & *Symmachus* sometimes render it. "Assuredly, so it is. — "The Creator, saith *St. Paul*, who is Blessed for evermore, *Amen, yea, that he is*. — If it be matter of *Desire* or *Prayer*, Then it is all the *Prayer* repeated again in one word, which the *Greek* turns by, *ἡρώωτο*, the *Latines* by, *Fiat*, we in *English*, "so be it, I come quickly, saith *Christ*: *Amen*, saith the *Apostle*, come Lord *Jesus*, that is, *I both believe and desire it*. So the Prophet *Jeremiah*. God having said, "obey my voice, that I may perform the Oath, which I have Sworn to your Fathers, &c. — Then answer'd I (saith he) and said, *Amen, O Lord*. We read it, "So be it, O Lord. It is an expression both of *Faith* in *Gods promises*, and *Desire to enjoy them*. But in another place of that Prophet it denotes *desire alone* and by it self without any belief or persuasion of the Truth of what went before. Thus, when *Hananiah* had Prophecied falsely the return of the *Vessels* and of *Jechoniah*; *Jeremiah*, to express his good wishes only, though he knew and foretold the

Rom. 1. 26.

Rev. 22. 20.

Jerem. 11. 5.

Ch. 28. 6.

Contrary, saith upon it; "Amen, The Lord do so. The Lord perform the words which thou hast promised. — q. d. This would please me very well; and This is matter of my hearty wishes too, if so it pleased God.

Amen, Originally and primarily is, Affirmantis, a word of Faith and persuasion, affirming or assenting to the truth of what is said. But sometimes it is moreover according to what goes before it, Optantis, a word of wishing and desiring, or Concedentis & ratum habentis, a note of consent and ratification, And that is the chief notion under which we are to look upon it throughout the Churches Service. As a Subscription of him that useth it to that which went before; as a Testimony of his assent and consent thereunto; and accordingly sometimes not only his Faith and persuasion, but his wishes and desires. Amen all the end of our prayers and praises, So be it. At the end of our Creeds, So it is. And in like manner, whensoever an affirmation goes before it, as in these Sentences — "Curfed is the man, who doth so and so. Amen is, So we believe. Hereby therefore the people Saying Amen to these Curses, as before to the Blessings, did openly testify their firm belief of what had been pronounced in the name of God; set to their Seal, that God was true, and as his promises of Blessing to be embraced, so his threatnings of Curse to be feared. They did hereby declare publicly their assent to the truth and Equity of them all; that it was but just and fitting that, whosoever among them did so and so transgress, should so and so be punished; The disobedient accursed, as the obedient Blessed; and upon the whole they gave up their full consent to the Law of God, established and ratified with these Blessings in it to the Obedient, and Curses to the Disobedient, as all Laws are with the People sanctions of due Rewards and Punishments.

They

They did not therefore, as some vainly surmise, here-
in unnaturally *Curse themselves*, or *wish these Curses ab-*
solutely to light upon themselves; No more than he that
consenteth to any Law, that hath a *penalty* annexed
to it. He only saith in effect, *I consent to the Law thus*
promulged; I yield to the justice and equity of this pu-
nishment upon the breach of it; and think those wor-
thy of the punishment who shall presume to break it.
But, all the while, the scope, design and intention of
the Law is *Obedience and a Blessing upon that Obedience*;
and the punishment annexed only to *deter from the vio-*
lation of it. But then indeed, upon a *supposition* of such
a wicked violation, we declare further, that the *penal-*
ty is but just and righteous; nay, and we do *voluntarily*
expose our selves to the Infliction of it, by consenting to
the Law so established.

And that now was the chief design of what was here
prescribed — “*And all the People shall answer and say,*
“*Amen. viz. openly to testify their Consent, as hath*
been said, to the Law of God that had this penalty or
Curse by him annexed to the breach of it; and so to
enter themselves solemnly into Covenant with God, in hopes
of his Blessing, and in dread of his Curse, both which
were set before them; thus to vow and swear fealty to Gods
Laws, and bind their Souls with a Bond unto him; as the
Psalmist saith of himself, “I have Sworn to keep thy
“righteous Judgments. — And every vow and Oath
made unto God doth necessarily end in a Curse upon our
selves, if we break it, as Plutarch well notes; a Curse
which by our perjury we pull down upon our selves,
and may in a sort too, namely, upon that supposition, be
said before-hand to imprecate. So when Nehemiah
took an Oath of the Priests to do according to their pro-
mise of Restitution. ch. 5. “He shook his Lap and said,
“so God shake out every man from his house, and
from

Psal. 119.

πάς ὁρκος
ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν
τελευτὰ τῆς
ἐπιφύλαξης.
Rom. Quest.

“from his Labour, that performeth not this promise,
 “even thus be he shaken out and emptyed ! And all
 “the people said *Amen*, and praised the Lord and did
 “according to this promise. 11. 13. Yet here they did
 not *properly Curse themselves*, neither, but testified their
 belief, that God would so *Curse the Disobedient*, and that
 it was *just and Righteous that so he should*, whoever they
 were, and hereupon were *moved to Obedience*. Or, it
 may be, there was *thus much more* in it ; they did *Oblige*
themselves under a Curse to this Obedience, as every one
 that appeals to God Almighty as witness and Judge in
 a Case doth ; saying in a manner, *God do thus and thus*
to me, if I perform not. And yet, all the while, this
 is not any *uncharitable Cursing of our selves*, but a most
charitable obliging our selves in the highest manner we can
to our bounden duty, by the Belief and dread of that Curse,
which otherwise we look for : As we find it exprest in that
 solemn Covenant with God, which *Nehemiah* Caused
 the *Jews* to Seal unto, “They enter’d into a Curse and
 “into an Oath to walk in Gods Law. *ch. 10. 29.*

And thus now I have given you an account of the
Pattern before us, the *Divine institution and appointment*
among the Jews, and their *practise* according to it. It
 remains only, that I shew you *next*, as briefly as I can,
how far we also may be still concern’d in it.

And *First*, in the General, should we grant it to have
 been *wholly and purely Ceremonial*, a positive and pecu-
 liar Ordinance of God for his People the *Jews only*, yet
 thus certainly it becomes us all, both to think and speak
 with all *Modesty and Reverence* of it, as *such* ; God him-
 self having Commanded that the *Curses* of his Law
 should be *thus* orderly and distinctly denounced by the
Levites ; and that all the People, at the hearing of them,
 should as distinctly and audibly answer and say, *Amen*.
 We must not therefore presume to Condemn this, ei-
 ther

ther for a foolish or a wicked appointment. We must take heed, how we Blaspheme and affront God Almighty by the little Cavils and Exceptions of our prejudiced and forestall'd apprehensions. To this height of impiety doth the zealous hatred of some against the Liturgie bring them. What otherwise they pretend to Reverence in their Bibles, they most ignorantly reproach and dispute against in the Common-prayer-book.

But then, Secondly, though there were confessedly some particular Circumstances in this Case that belonged to the Jews only (such as the division of their Tribes after that manner upon the two opposite Mountains and the like) yet the Substance of the thing it self is manifestly such as carries a great deal of natural Equity and useful morality in it; and is the rather to be imitated by us, because God hath gone before in prescribing of it to this very purpose of engaging and promoting Obedience among his antient People; Obedience being unto us, as well as unto them, the way to Blessing, and Disobedience to us, as well as unto them, the way to a Curse.

As for the Laws of eternal Equity and Righteousness, our Blessed Saviour came not to destroy or put an end to them, but πληρώσαι, more fully to Preach and more effectually to press them upon the World. And as to matters of Order and decencie among the People, though of particular and positive institution, we may observe a frequent imitation in the Christian Church under the New Testament, without any challenge for so doing. We Rehearse their Deed as the Rule of our Lives. The very Petitions of the Lords Prayer had been used in their devotions. The materials of both Sacraments, the water of Baptism, the Loaf and Cup in the Lords Supper took their rise from them: Bishops, Priests and Deacons in the Government of the Church, are by the Fathers resembled to their High-Priests, Priests, and Levites.

And

* Ut sciamus
traditiones A-
postolicas sum-
ptas de veteri
Testamento,
Quod Aaron &
filij eius atque
Levite in Tem-
plo fuerunt, hoc
sibi Episcopi,
Presbyteri &
Diaconi ven-
dicant in Ec-
clesiâ. Sc. Hi-
ron ad Evagr.
† Totum Regi-
men Ecclesiæ
Christi
conformatum
fuit ad synago-
garum exem-
plar.
Grot. in Act. 11

* And the very manner and order of worshipping God in their Synagogues, for Reading the Holy Scriptures, and Prayers, as the Learned † know, hath been readily Copied out in the Churches of Christ. — No wonder therefore, that our Reformed Church was easily induced to an imitation of this most useful Discipline likewise, which hath Gods Honour and our Good (the great ends of all our Lives) stamped, as it were, in Legible Characters upon the forehead of it.

It tends apparently to the Honour of God and his Laws, thus to have the Equity Truth and Righteousness of them made known, proclaimed, and acknowledged : And it tends as apparently to promote Righteousness and Vertue in us, thus distinctly to own and profess our firm belief, that all the Laws of God are Righteous and Good, and that the Sanctions of them are all just and equal ; and we left *inexcusable* upon the Transgression of them. It is therefore a very fitting means and help, you see, both to Glorify God and to promote our own good and happiness ; to bring us to Repentance, for what is past, and to keep us in Obedience, for the time to come.

Nor hath this Transaction any thing in it that is repugnant or unsuitable to the Times of the Gospel, more than of the Law, to the Christian worship, any more than to the Jewish.

“ Christ, it is true, hath taken away the Curse of “ the Law, being made a Curse for us, as the Apostle hath it. There is no dispute of that. And so it was then too, in Type and figure, shadowed forth and adumbrated in their Sacrifices : He being the “ Lamb slain “ from the Foundation of the World, and the substance of all those shadows. But this is only still with respect unto True Penitents ; that is, those who sincerely Repent of their former Disobedience, and as sincerely re-
solve

Gal. 3. 13.

Revel. 13. 8.

solve and endeavour to reform and amend for the fu-
 ture. As to *all others*, who bid God defiance, and sin,
elata manu, with an hand lift up against Heaven, as it
 were *daring* the Almighty to punish them, the Curse
 of the Law holds *still in force*; and all the Acts of
 wilful sin and Disobedience are, *no less now than before*;
 under the Sentence of Gods Curse. And we ought
 every one *to believe and Confess this*, till by the sight of
 our Cursed wretched and miserable Estate, by reason
 of Sin, we are brought unto Repentance and Reformati-
 on, and so *qualified for the Pardon and Blessing of the*
Gospel of Grace through Jesus Christ. Then we are as-
 sured, that there shall be no Condemnation to us, who Rom. 8. 1.
 walk "not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit; but
 we shall most certainly be deliver'd from the Execu-
 tion of all those Threatnings, not because there is *no*
truth and certainty in them, but in regard *that our Re-*
deemer, by his merit and satisfaction hath purchased for
us a Release and immunity from them. We are yet to
 declare a *steadfast believe of the Truth and certainty of these*
Curses; thereby to own what our sins deserve at Gods
 hands, and most justly expose us to; and admire the
 patience and forbearance of God towards us; and they
 are to be as a School-master to lead us unto Christ for de-
 liverance from them, and as a Tutor and Monitor of the
 great obligation we have to him our Redeemer; They are
 also to bring us to a true and serious Humiliation for all
 our Transgressions, and to warn us against them for the
 time to come. For, notwithstanding the Blessing of the
 Gospel, we are yet, if we take not heed, liable to a
 Curse also, if we are wilfully Disobedient to it; nay
 and a greater and sadder Curse and Condemnation, than the
 Law ever pronounced, because the Blessing to us is by many
 degrees greater, than what was set before them. As we
 have better promises, so we have also a sorer Judgment

D

held

† "If any
 "man love
 "not the
 "Lord Jesus
 "Let him be
 "Anathema"
 Maranatha.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

held forth unto us, as the *Apostle to the Hebrews*, more than once, intimateth. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? *ch. 2.* And of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Blood of the Son of God, &c? *ch. 10.* The Gospel is not made up altogether of comforts and promises, as some mistake it, but hath its Threats and Terrors also. "knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord we perswade men
2 Cor. 5. 11.

Both the *Baptist*, Christs fore-runner, and our Blessed Saviour himself too, call upon us to "Repent, that we may flee from wrath; and tell us, that the Axe is now laid to the root of the Trees, so that every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit is to be hewen down, and cast into the Fire; and that unless we Repent we shall all perish. — In that famous Sermon of our Lords upon the Mount, we have him not only, as it were upon Mount Gerizim uttering the Beatitudes or Blessings to his Disciples. *St. Matt. 5.* "Blessed are the poor in Spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the Peace-makers. Blessed are they that are persecuted for Righteousness-sake. But, if we compare *St. Luke ch. 6.* We find him also as it were upon Mount Ebal, to denounce unto others a contrary Wo and Curse. "But Wo unto you that are Rich. Wo unto you that are full. Wo unto you that Laugh now. Wo unto you when all men speak well of you. — As elsewhere we find him uttering many Woes against the Hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, and those that Repented not at the sight of his mighty works among them. And, when he vouchsafes to give us an account of the Judgment of the
Last

St. Matt. 23.

St. Luke 11.

St. Matt. 11.

St. Luke 10.

Last day he lets us understand, how all men then shall be divided and separated, as the Children of Israel now were, the Righteous, that is the Sons of the Free-Woman, the Faithful Disciples of Christ, as it were on Gerizim, at the Right hand to receive a Blessing, but the unrighteous, that is the Bond-Slaves of Sin and Satan, as it were on Ebal, at the Left hand to receive the Curse. St. Matth. 25. "Then shall the King say unto them on his Right hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father. ver. 34. Then shall he say also unto them on the Left-hand, Depart from me ye Cursed. — ver. 41. So that, you see, the Gospel it self hath its Sentences both of Blessing and Cursing; And there is an Amen too, you may observe, at the end of all the Four Evangelists, which relates to all things Contained in them, Woes and Curses, as well as Blessings, to testify the Certainty of both, and the Belief of both in the Church of Christ. Amen, that is, This is the Gospel of Truth. We say commonly, as True as Gospel. And both of them shall be made good to the full at the "Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God; when all Nations shall be gather'd before the Great Judge, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats, and set the Sheep on his Right hand, (that is, as hath been said, on Gerizim) and the Goats on the Left, (that is, on Ebal.) When our Lord shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking Vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; but to be glorified in his Saints and admired in all them that believe. 2 Thes. 1.

This Institution therefore among the Jews, which gives us a Remembrance and Representation of these things is not any more unsuitable to the times of the Gospel, than to those of the Law; For we are all *ἑνωμένοι Χριστῷ*

St. Mat. 28. 20.
St. Mark 16.
20.
St. Luke 24.
53.
St. John. 21. 25

† 1 Cor. 9. 21.
Gal. 6. 2.
St. Jam. 2. 12.

under the Law to Christ. It is as fit now as then, that we should attend to the whole will of God, his Curses no less than Blessings. 'Tis as fit now as then, that we should set the Amen of our Faith to each of them; answering unto every Sentence in the Holy word of God, Amen, and so confessing with our mouths, that we believe it unfeignedly in our hearts. "To the intent, as it follows "in our Church Service, that, being admonished of the "great indignation of God against sinners, we may "the rather be moved unto earnest and true Repen- "tance; and may walk more warily in these dange- "rous dayes; fleeing from such vices, for which we "affirm with our own mouths the Curse of God to be "due.

Mark here, I beseech you, the plain Resolution of our Amen to Gods several Curses. It is not uncharitably to Curse our selves or others; No, all is in order to a Blessing, that we may every one carry a share of the Blessing home with us. It is only to affirm with our mouths, the Truth of the Divine Curses; That the Curse is due to such and such Transgressors by Gods appointment. That it is most certain all such Sinners are really accursed by God, under his Curse, while they continue such; and have no possibility of removing that Curse, but by a speedy Repentance and Return to God for pardon and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, that by and in him they may be Blessed; for ever Blessed by being first saved from their Sins, and turn'd from their iniquities.—God of old declared his great Indignation against those, "who hearing the words of his Curses, should "yet bless themselves in their hearts, saying I shall have "peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart "to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord, saith Moses, "will not spare such a man, but all the Curses in this "book shall lie upon him. Deuter. 29. 18. 19. The Prophet

Prophet *Isaiah* proclaims it, *once and again*. "There is
 "no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. *ch. 48. 22.*
 and *ch. 57. 21.* "Let no man deceive you with vain
 "words, saith the *Apostle*, for because of these things
 "cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of Dis-
 "obedience. *Ephes. 5. 6.* And when they shall say peace
 "and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon
 "them, as Travel upon a Woman with Child, and they
 "shall not escape. *1 Thes. 5. 3.* It is of great concern-
 ment to us therefore, *in time to see and understand and*
believe and be sensible of the Cursed State which our sins
necessarily and unavoidably involve us in, and to judge
 "and condemn our selves, that we may anticipate the 1 Cor. II. 31.
 judgment of the Lord, that we may not be then con-
 demned by him; and that we may be moved effectually
 to humble our selves in this day of grace, and sea-
 son lent us for Repentance, to deprecate all his displea-
 sure against us, and obtain acceptance and favour with
 him through his Beloved.

It is not we, alas ! that make Obedience a Blessed thing,
or Disobedience a Cursed thing. 'Tis all one for that,
 whether we *Believe it, or not* : Whether we *say and own*
it, or not. The Blessing and Curse are, both of them,
 already pronounced from God. They are the Sentences
 of his Curse contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, the Infal-
 lible word of him, that cannot lye; and gather'd out
 thence only for our caution and warning. Our Amen ad-
 ded to them is but a fitting declaration, that those whom
 God hath Blessed are certainly Blessed; and those whom he
 hath Cursed are as certainly Cursed; saying with our Lips
 that we believe this in our hearts, which we are Damned
 infidels if we believe not.

And this way of owning and confessing it, is a very pro-
 bable and likely means to prevent the danger by shewing
 of it to us; to bring us, as hath been said, to an hear-
 ty

ty Repentance for all that is past and a through amendment for the time to come, that so we may avoid the Curse and inherit the Blessing; that taking this leisurely admonition of Gods fierce displeasure against such and such Sinners, viz. (Idolaters, Disobedient to Parents and Governors, Unjust, Cruel, Malicious, Unclean, Uncharitable, Covetous, and such-like, who do err and go astray from the Commands of God, the paths of piety, Righteousness and Sobriety, and walk in the High-Road to destruction) we may the rather be moved to an earnest and true Repentance in all these particulars for the gross miscarriages we have been guilty of; and for the future awakened and stir'd up to take greater heed unto our selves, and walk circumspectly, especially in these dangerous dayes, wherein there are so many bad examples, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation; fleeing from those several Vices, for which we have affirmed with our own mouths, (and therefore affirmed with our mouths, because we believe in our hearts) the Curse of God is due, as it is clearly and plainly legible in his Holy word.

EX OYE TWO.

There can be nothing of impiety, or folly, nothing of antiquated Judaism, or innovating Popery, and Superstition certainly in all this. Nay, I must pronounce upon the whole, that there is nothing, which keeps persons from an hearty Compliance with so wholesome a Service, but either: First, the not understanding of it aright. Or, Secondly, some secret love reserved to their own Sins, which makes them backward and unwilling thus to enter into a sacred vow and covenant with God under a Curse against them. For otherwise the Benefit of this Devotion is most Conspicuous. What more prevailing motive can there possibly be both to Repentance and Reformation, than this Remembrance of the dreadful Judgment of God hanging over our heads, whilst we continue in Sin, and alwayes ready to fall upon us, prompting of us therefore,

therefore, as the *only remedy and way to escape*, forthwith to return unto God, with all contrition and meekness of heart, bewailing and lamenting our wicked life, acknowledging and confessing our aggravated offences to him, and seeking to bring forth Fruits becoming penitents.

And, *Thus if we do*, as the excellent *Homily* of the Church assures us in the Close, "Christ will deliver us from the *Curse of the Law*, and from the *extreme malediction*, which will light upon them that shall be set on the *Left hand*; and he will set us at his *Right hand*, and give us the gracious *benediction of his Father*, commanding us to take possession of his most glorious Kingdom.

"Unto which he vouchsafe to bring us all for his Infinite mercy! *Amen.*

FINIS.
